


<p><i>Meeting Notes</i></p> 	<p><i>Downtown Master Plan</i> <i>March 3, 2005</i> <i>12:00 p.m.</i> <i>Cornhusker Conference Center</i> <i>Garret Room - 333 S. 13th Street</i></p>		
<p><i>Present</i></p>	<p>Don Arambula Jon Camp David Cary Carol Connor George Crandall Karl Fredrickson Randy Hoskins</p>	<p>Lynn Johnson Marvin Krout Dallas McGee Polly McMullen Annette McRoy Kent Morgan</p>	<p>Patte Newman Cecil Steward Myrna Tewes Jon Weinberg Terry Werner Michele Abendroth</p>

Jon Weinberg called the meeting to order at 12:27 p.m.

George Crandall stated that the work session with the Downtown Action Team (DAT) immediately preceding this meeting was a big help in that it helped to answer some of their questions. One of the questions had to do with the retail location and the configuration of the retail. They wanted to make sure that they had the right street and the right configuration. They did an inventory of space that is currently available and the opportunities for rehabilitation and new development. They did this analysis for P, O and N Streets. ERA stated that in a reconfigured environment, the downtown could support 360,000 square feet of new retail space. That would provide the critical mass to allow the downtown to function as a healthy, vital retail center. They found there was limited space available on all the streets, with N Street having the most potential. The problem with N Street is that it is not connected to the University or the Haymarket. So they determined that N Street would not work. So they reaffirmed that P Street would be the retail center.

The DAT also talked about a library site. The two possible sites are Pershing and on 12th and N Streets.

Crandall continued by noting that the schedule was also discussed at the meeting earlier today. The final report format and design guidelines were also discussed. A plan document will be prepared which will run through the City process. They will develop design guidelines which will need to be adopted. Code and ordinance changes will also need to be changed so that whatever is built is consistent with the plan. Don Arambula added that we will need to discuss financial considerations and return of investment. They will prioritize projects and identify costs.

Lynn Johnson asked if other communities have developed some creative strategies for funding. Crandall stated that there is no tool like tax increment financing. That is the main driver that is

successful. Arambula stated that there are other strategies as well, depending on what is available to the community. We must also recognize that there still must be improvements made whether or not this plan is adopted. It is important to take the existing funding sources for capital improvements and leverage the most private sector investment out of them.

Jon Camp stated that he appreciated the comment by Carol Connor regarding practicality. He believes that we need to inject reasonableness and financial practicality in the plan.

Marvin Krout asked if they have seen other cities the size of Lincoln go through a transition in terms of street space as opposed to pedestrian space. Crandall stated that 40% of the land is in the public right-of-way, and if it isn't pedestrian friendly, then no one wants to come downtown. Lincoln's right-of-ways are 100 feet plus. We are fortunate that we have some room to play with. On-street parking is critical, and we need to accommodate automobiles in downtown. Having said that, one of the most important things is being able to provide parking structures. Horizontal and vertical circulation is very important. Arambula stated that the treatment of the right-of-way is even more important here because we don't have a physical feature to define it. Newman stated that the City Council had a discussion regarding this, and their vision is to make it more of an attraction rather than a utilitarian look.

Camp asked how you compensate for the parking garage when people typically don't want to walk more than 1300 feet for retail. Crandall stated that typically you don't include the walk from the garage to the retail in the walking distance. The best scenario is to have the garage close to the retail. Connectivity from retail to the Haymarket is important and must be convenient. It is always advised to have the pedestrian be the priority in defining how the downtown is designed.

Cecil Steward stated that in 2003 there was an article in the USA Today about why Americans don't walk. The old answer was that they are lazy, and the new answer is that they can't. It is about having the choice. If we avoid the pedestrian-friendly characteristics, he feels it would mis-using public funds for this planning process.

Krout commented that almost everything in planning is trade-offs. Nelson Nygaard stated that you can take one lane of traffic and parallel parking and convert it to angle parking and a bicycle lane, and you end up with 300 more on-street parking spaces in downtown. He feels that it is a good trade-off.

Terry Werner asked what you do if a developer wants to spend \$15-20 million on a project, but it's not quite in the vision. Crandall stated that every good plan has some flexibility. Design guidelines allow you to get the investment but ensure that a project still fits within the historical context of the community. It is an issue, but you need the framework to evaluate it.

Johnson how the design review process works. Arambula stated that there is an advisory committee that reviews the application and then provides a recommendation to the City Council. Arambula stated that you need to define the bounds of the committee and discourage designing

by the committee. It is about compatibility and fit in the downtown. Crandall stated that the design guidelines need to be one page and very easy to read. There should be a checklist which results in identifying whether or not a project is in compliance.

Werner stated that one of the community values in Lincoln is preservation and asked how to determine which buildings are eligible to be torn down. Krout stated that we have buildings and districts which have landmark status. There is an inventory of other building which the Historic Preservation planner and the Historic Preservation Commission have said are eligible for listing.. Steward stated that this goes back to having a framework. We need to do a better job of identifying what is historic preservation and not just save everything because it is old. Crandall added that the decision should not lie with one person.

Steward stated that having design guidelines would force the developer to bring in more information earlier. Crandall agreed that is true as the discussion is started earlier. Arambula stated that their intent is to streamline the process. It also goes back to whether it should be a guideline or a standard. For example, they feel there should be a standard in the City ordinance stating that P Street has to have ground-floor retail. It should not be a guideline because it needs to have the strength of the law behind it and not up for discretionary review. They see the standards as keeping bad things from happening. Guidelines attempt to aspire to design excellence.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

F:\FILES\PLANNING\Downtown\Minutes\Downtown Lunch 03 03 05.wpd